

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4678

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USIAC FOR IOP/M, ILA
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EO 11652 N/A
SUBJECT: REACTION TO U.S. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

1. PUBLIC AND MEDIA REACTION TO U.S. GENERATORS AND FOOD SHIPMENTS TO HELP GOH MEET CURRENT EMERGENCY HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE. APRIL 12 ARRIVAL OF GENERATORS RELIEVED AIR OF BITTERNESS AND NEAR DESPAIR CAST OVER CAPITAL SINCE EARLY MARCH WITH ONSET SEVERE POWER RATIONING. RELAXATION OF TENSION WAS READILY VISIBLE AS 3-MEGAWATT GENERATORS BEGAN TO ALLOW STILL RATIONED BUT INCREASED ELECTRICITY TO SEVERAL HARD HIT AREAS. ANNOUNCEMENT APRIL 11 OF FORTHCOMING GENERATORS AND COMMODITIES CAME ONLY 5 DAYS AFTER PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO NATION OUTLINING PROBLEMS OF FOOD, WATER AND ENERGY, AND HAD EFFECT OF RESTORING CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY OF GOH, WITH HELP OF FRIENDS, TO MEET CRISIS. U.S. IS FIRST COUNTRY TO HAVE RESPONDED THUS FAR TO NUMEROUS GOH APPEALS FOR EMERGENCY AID.

2. FOLLOWING CONFIRMATION OVER EASTER HOLIDAY WEEKEND THAT GENERATORS AND FOOD FORTHCOMING, USIS CALLED URGENT PRESS
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CONFERENCE LATE APRIL 11. ECON OFFICER, AID DISASTER COORDINATOR AND DEFENSE ATTACHE, AND PAO SUMMARIZED GOH-USG DISCUSSIONS, ANNOUNCED ARRIVAL OF PLANES NEXT DAY AND APPROVAL OF CREDIT FOR 20,000 TONS OF RICE AND CORN. MEDIA GAVE IMMEDIATE AND WIDESPREAD COVERAGE. ARRIVAL OF FIRST USAF C-5A TRANSPORT NEXT MORNING ATTRACTED 300 SPECTATORS, PRESS AND GOH OFFICIALS INCLUDING MINISTERS

OF PUBLIC WORKS AND FINANCE. HUNDREDS MORE WERE ON HAND FOR ARRIVAL OF SECOND PLANE LATE SAME AFTERNOON. PRESIDENT DUVALIER, NEARLY INCOGNITO IN A VOLVO AT THE FAR END OF THE TERMINAL AREA, ALSO WITNESSED THE UNLOADING. PAPERS DESCRIBED PLANES AS "MONTRES," REMARKING THAT FRONT LOADING DOORS LOOKED LIKE "JAWS OF A SHARK".

3. PLANES, GENERATORS, PRECISION AND SMOOTHNESS OF OPERATION, CREWS AND THE 15 TECHNICIANS WHO WILL OPERATE OR MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT PRODUCED GRATIFYINGLY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF U.S. MIGHT, TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT AND HUMANITARIAN SPIRIT. WEEKEND MEDIA REPORTS, PARTICULARLY RADIO, COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON IMPROVEMENT IN POWER RATIONING MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH U.S. ASSISTANCE.
GOMEZ

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Message Attributes

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